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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8868
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZJ/HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH IMMEDIATE 9649
RUEHRH/CHUSMTM RIYADH SA IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIA/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCINCCENT INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T RIYADH 001162

SIPDIS

PLEASE PASS TO DRL/IRF FOR AGOMBIS, DRL/NESCA FOR JLIEBERMAN, AND NEA/ARP FOR BMCGRATH.

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/28/2018

TAGS: [KIRF](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: DEPORTATION OF CHRISTIANS IN TAIF

REF: A. RIYADH 713

[B.](#) JEDDAH 186

[C.](#) RIYADH 1090

Classified By: Charge' d' Affaires Michael Gfoeller
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[11.](#) (S) SUMMARY: On July 26 and 27, 16 Indian Christians were notified that they have been ordered for immediate deportation. They were reportedly told by their sponsors, who were told "not by the police, but thobe-clad secret agents from Makkah Governorate." There is currently no evidence of any wrong-doing on the part of the Christians, or any clear legally legitimate reason for the ordered deportations. END SUMMARY

SPONSORS TOLD TO ARRANGE EXIT VISAS "TODAY"

[12.](#) (S) On July 26 Embassy POLOFFs were contacted regarding the immediate order for deportation of six Indian Christians. This group of six Christians were of a group of 16 imprisoned last May (Reftel A and B), but released the following day after Embassy Riyadh interceded on their behalf with the SAG. Of the original 16, one has already left the country on his own accord. On July 27, Embassy Riyadh was notified that the remaining group had all been informed that they too must leave Saudi Arabia immediately. It was reported that "secret agents from the Makkah Governorate" instructed the sponsors of these individuals to arrange immediate exit visas and hand over their passports to the "thobe-clad secret agents." As some of these individuals have small children, there is concern what effect the immediate deportations will have on the family members.

[13.](#) (S) COMMENT: These deportation orders, if actually implemented, could indicate a reaction on the part of conservative religious figures to King Abdullah's recent moves in support of greater religious tolerance, including the Madrid Inter-faith Conference (Septel). It should also be noted that the timing of these deportation orders may be no accident, as King Abdullah is currently vacationing outside of the country. END COMMENT.

GFOELLER